

## Opposition to Patients' Rights Repeal Act

Written by Mike Honda

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On Wednesday, House Republicans held a politically charged and reckless vote to repeal last year's landmark healthcare reform legislation, seeking to put insurance companies back in charge of our healthcare system, rather than patients and their doctors. Since its passage, the Affordable Care Act has already made health care more affordable by giving small businesses a tax credit to provide insurance coverage, and in 2014, it will begin providing tax credits to those who need help buying insurance -- representing the largest middle class tax cut for health care in history. Once the Affordable Care Act is fully implemented, Americans will have access to affordable health coverage in a new competitive private health insurance market through state exchanges. Yet, the bill under consideration would eliminate all of these provisions with no consideration for the wellbeing of the millions of Americans for whom it will improve healthcare.

Repeal of the Affordable Care Act has direct consequences to our diverse congressional district that I am proud to represent, California's 15<sup>th</sup> district. The Patients' Rights Repeal Act would:

- Increase the number of people in our District without health insurance by 17,000 individuals;
- Allow insurance companies to deny coverage to as many as 307,000 individuals, including up to 40,000 children, with pre-existing conditions;
- Rescind consumer protections for 484,000 individuals who have health insurance through their employer or the market for private insurance;
- Eliminate health care tax credits for up to 14,900 small businesses and 86,000 families;
- Increase prescription drug costs for 8,000 seniors who hit the Part D drug "donut hole" and deny new preventive care benefits to 76,000 seniors;
- Increase the costs of early retiree coverage for up to 7,600 early retirees;
- Eliminate new health care coverage options for 2,900 uninsured young adults; and
- Increase the costs to hospitals of providing uncompensated care by \$113 million annually.

Opponents of the Affordable Care Act have used questionable arguments to validate their repeal efforts, including claims that it would inflate the national debt. In truth, the Affordable Care Act helps to reduce the national debt by minimizing waste, fraud, and abuse in the health care system and preventing the rampant growth of health care costs. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, repealing the law would increase the deficit by \$230 billion over the next decade and over \$1 trillion in the following decade.

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It is for these reasons; I continue to support the Affordable Care Act, as it is vital to the wellbeing of every community in our nation. I stood against this reckless repeal of critical healthcare reform and voted against the Patients' Rights Repeal Act.